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ABSTRACT

Almost 900 children in grades 1 through 8, with reading difficulties, are given special individualized instruction at the Yuba County Reading-Learning Center each year. Operating on a twelve-months basis, the Center seeks to improve the children's reading and verbal skills and bring about more positive attitudes toward school and education. The children spend 1 hour a day, 4 days a week, at the center, in classes of 24 students. The emphasis, however, is on individual and small group instruction. Teacher training is a significant part of this program. Each year, 11 teachers are given a year off from their regular classroom assignments to be on the center staff and receive training as reading specialists. An evaluation of the program showed (1) that all children improved in oral and silent reading and word analysis; (2) that positive changes in the children's attitudes were noted; and (3) that the teacher training section of the program proved to be successful for the reading centers, the schools, and the teachers themselves. (AI)

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Model Programs

Reading

Yuba County Reading-Learning Center
Marysville, California

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OE-30038

Model Programs

Reading

Yuba County Reading-Learning Center
Marysville, California

A two-part program of clinic instruction and teacher training to improve children's reading skills

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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FOREWORD

New approaches to the teaching of reading are continually being developed to provide more effective learning opportunities for children who have inadequate reading skills. The Office of Education, through its National Center for Educational Communication, contracted with the American Institutes for Research, Palo Alto, Calif., to prepare short descriptive booklets on 10 of the promising reading programs operating in the Nation's schools.

Each booklet contains a wide range of information presented in standardized format, including a brief introduction to the program, the context or setting in which it operates, an indepth description, an evaluation based upon empirical data, sources of further information, and a bibliography.

Seven reading programs were included in the first *Model Programs--Childhood Education* series. Since these booklets had already been published,
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FOREWORD

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these booklets had already been published, they were not duplicated for this series. However, so that the seven will not be "lost" to those interested in exemplary reading programs, they are listed here by title and OE number. All are available at 20 cents each from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402.

- Interdependent Learner Model of a Follow Through Program, New York, N.Y., OE-20149.
- Responsive Environment Model of a Follow Through Program, Goldsboro, N.C., OE-20139.
- DOVACK Reading Program, Monticello, Fla., OE-20141.
- Corrective Reading Program, Wichita, Kans., OE-20158.
- Exemplary Center for Reading Instruction, Salt Lake City, Utah, OE-20136.
- Perceptual Development Center Program, Natchez, Miss., OE-20142.
- Project PLAN, Parkersburg, W. Va., OE-20150.

INTRODUCTION

Almost 900 children with reading difficulties are given special individualized instruction at the Yuba County Reading-Learning Center each year. Operating for 12 months annually with title I ESEA funds, the Center offers students 1 hour of daily reading instruction and seeks to improve their reading and verbal skills and bring about more positive attitudes toward school and education.

The Center also offers training for teachers in the district. Each year 11 teachers are selected for the program and are given a year off from their regular classroom assignments to be on the Center staff. Their duties include planning and implementing an instructional program fitted to the needs of each child assigned to them, and taking part in a variety of inservice training programs and courses, all designed to help them become effective reading teachers.

CONTEXT OF PROGRAM

LOCALE

Yuba County in north central California is an area of 643 square miles of rolling Sierra foothills and farmlands, which supports a predominantly rural agricultural population of 47,700. The unemployment rate is almost twice the national average, and nearly one-fifth of the families receive Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC). The population of Yuba County is culturally diverse and highly transient.

THE SCHOOL SYSTEM

The Yuba County Reading-Learning Center in Olivehurst, Calif., serves children from three school districts in the county, Marysville Joint Unified School District being the major one.

The average class size in Marysville Joint Unified School District is 28; the average pupil-teacher ratio is 26 to 1. Average daily attendance is about 9,000, and approximately 4,000 children are enrolled in kindergarten through grade six. Transiency presents a persistent problem, since about one third of the total enrollment changes during a school year. The cost per child per year was estimated at $700 for 1969-70.

In addition to the Reading-Learning Center project, Marysville Joint Unified School District has undertaken other innovative programs. Through title III ESEA funds it offers a media enrichment program that includes a closed-circuit television system and a modern materials library. Through a title VII grant it provides a program of bilingual instruction for Mexican-American children which attempts to develop capabilities in both Spanish and English by using Spanish as the initial instructional language.

SPECIAL FACTORS 3

For some time prior to the beginning of the Reading-Learning Center program in 1966, school personnel in Yuba County had been aware of the need for additional reading assistance for their students. This need had been evident in the results of Stanford Achievement Tests, locally devised tests, and teacher observations. For children from families dependent on AFDC assistance, the need seemed especially great; many were performing below grade level in reading, had a very low level of verbal functioning, and exhibited negative attitudes toward school and education.

Yuba County educators have attempted to improve reading instruction by coordinating opportunities offered at both the State

and Federal level. State assistance was provided in 1965 when the California legislature passed the Miller-Unruh Basic Reading Act in order to prevent and correct reading disabilities in first-, second-, and third-grade students. The act provides for salaries for teachers specializing in reading, scholarships for teachers seeking to improve their skills in teaching reading, and salaries for professional librarians hired by school districts. It allows teachers to become reading specialists by passing a written examination administered by the California State Board of Education. These specialists are assigned to districts according to a quota system based on size and need.

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Federal assistance was available through title I ESEA funds in 1965 for developing a Reading-Learning Center program. The program provides for a two-part attack on the reading problems of Yuba County children. First, the Center provides classroom teachers with 1 year of training to become reading specialists. The second part of the program is the diagnostic and therapeutic assistance at the Reading-Learning Center clinic for children with special reading problems. Whenever possible, county schools utilize the reading specialists rather than depend on the clinic to handle all special reading instruction.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

SCOPE

The major purpose of the Yuba County Reading-Learning Center is to improve the language arts skills of children, both through teacher training and clinical services. The Center operates on a 12-month basis. In the 1969-70 school year it trained 11 teachers and offered services to 649 pupils; in the summer it served about 300 pupils. The students came from levels K through eight; about 60 percent were in grades three through five. Approximately the same number of students and teachers are involved for 1970-71.

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The specific objectives of the reading clinic are:

- To improve children's classroom performance in reading
- To improve their verbal functioning
- To help children develop more positive attitudes toward school and education

FACILITIES

The Reading-Learning Center occupies several rooms in the Schools Administration Center and two portable buildings. Part of

the administration building was renovated to accommodate the director's office, a small reception area, and a large multipurpose room, which can be used for reading instruction. It includes a video screen, three listening and viewing stations with earphones and jacks, a complete library of reading materials, both commercial and teacher-made, and furniture and equipment for staff meetings and teacher training sessions. The Center also utilizes a printing shop and a videotape production and control center located in the building.

The portable buildings are across from the administration building and include offices for supportive services personnel, classrooms, and storage areas. Most of the classrooms are in one building where eight small soundproofed rooms or "teaching stations" line two sides of a large open area. The stations are equipped with tables and chairs or desks and chalkboards. They are mainly used by one teacher and one or two pupils in individualized work. Four stations are monitored by closed circuit video cameras; two have closed circuit video screens so visitors can observe learning activities without disrupting them. The central open space between the two rows of teaching stations is used for small-group instruction and includes bookshelves, other units for

material storage, and three small tables, each to accommodate four children.

Because some of the target area schools are too far away from Olivehurst to make it practical to transport children to the Reading-Learning Center, satellite centers have been established. A classroom is set aside for the special reading instruction in these schools, and all of the Center's materials and services are available to them upon request.

ACTIVITIES

After a child is recommended for clinic instruction by teachers and principals, complete information about his educational and physical background is gathered from school records and home visits by the Center's nurse. Each child is also given a series of tests to identify his learning difficulties. Administered by the psychologist or teacher, the test battery includes tests of general mental ability, visual and auditory discrimination, and specific reading skills. The results of the standardized tests are compiled, along with scores from informal reading tests and information from the cumulative records and home visits; and the clinic teacher uses the data to plan an individualized program of

instruction for the student. The teacher also keeps a daily record of each child's progress at the clinic to use in later evaluation.

Children admitted to the clinic travel there by station wagon and spend 1 hour a day, 4 days a week. Generally there are about 24 children in each class, and the emphasis is on individual or small-group instruction. Teacher aides and volunteers are used as much as possible so that individual attention can be provided. Teachers try to keep grouping fluid and flexible with no more than four pupils for a teacher at any given time. Each class is divided into two groups--one for individual or small-group instruction with the teacher at a teaching station, the other for less directed work with an aide in the central classroom. Each group spends half of its class time at a teaching station and half in the larger classroom.

The atmosphere of the classroom is especially important since this program seeks not only to improve reading and verbal skills but also to develop positive attitudes about learning. Teachers encourage each child to communicate in the classroom and help him gain self-confidence. His sense of competence is built up by having him utilize skills he has mastered to improve those he has

not mastered; his self-confidence is boosted by giving him frequent praise and positive reinforcement.

MATERIALS

Virtually every commercial remedial reading material is available at the Reading-Learning Center, and clinic teachers are urged to use them. They also use a wide array of teacher-made materials that are designed to develop or utilize a particular reading skill. Since instruction is generally individualized to fit the particular needs of each child, most of the materials are self-directing and self-corrective. Many types of materials are used, from sandpaper and felt to reading kits, and a majority are multisensory in approach.

PERSONNEL

The Reading-Learning Center involves a number of adults--administrators, teachers, teacher aides, educational specialists, and community members--whose participation ranges from part-time volunteer work to full-time employment.

The district's assistant superintendent of instruction devotes about one-eighth of his time to the Reading-Learning Center as fiscal officer and project coordinator. He is responsible for the

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entire fiscal administration including plans, budgets, purchases, payroll, and audits; and he coordinates the various State and Federal programs with the curriculum of the district schools.

The director of the Center is in charge of planning, scheduling, preparing, and evaluating the instructional program. She supervises research and dissemination of information and also directs Yuba County's title III and title VII, ESEA, programs.

Most of the daily administrative duties at the Center are performed by a full-time resource teacher, who administers tests, collects research data, and schedules classes and transportation. She serves teachers both at the Center and in the district by (1) maintaining the complete curriculum library and acquiring needed materials and equipment, (2) serving as a source of information about reading instruction, (3) contacting resource persons who can offer assistance, and (4) arranging demonstration lessons in reading. The resource teacher also maintains liaison between staff departments.

The 11 teachers who are trained at the clinic each year are selected from target area schools and must be recommended by their principals. Among the criteria for selection are excellent

teaching abilities; availability for study after school, on Saturdays, and during vacations; the desire to spend 1 year at the Center; and interest in professional and personal growth. For those selected, substitute teachers are provided for 1 year by the district to fill the vacated positions.

The teachers are both teachers and students during their year at the Reading-Learning Center. They are in charge of reading instruction and must appraise each student's reading level, prepare his remediation program, and record his progress. When necessary, they also refer students for special services to the psychologist or psychometrist. They must also take part in the training programs.

Teacher aides are recruited mainly from the Neighborhood Youth Corps and work 5 or 6 hours a week. During 1970-71, about 18 are working at a salary of $1.35 per hour. A few community members, such as doctors' wives and retired teachers, also work occasionally at the Center as volunteer aides. The tasks performed by the aides include bookkeeping duties such as keeping attendance records, cataloging and arranging materials in the Center library, and operation of classroom equipment and work with the children under the close direction of the teachers.

Several specialists are also part of the staff for the Reading-Learning Center. Health services are provided by a full-time nurse who collects information about each clinic student through conferences with teachers and parents, and the review of school records. She also conducts audiometric examinations and tele-binocular vision screening. A full-time educational psychologist is employed by the Center to recommend teaching methods for clinic teachers, to review all individual tests, to assist in developing individualized programs for each student, and to try to arrange for continuation of the programs when the child returns to his regular classroom. A full-time psychometrist, directly responsible to the psychologist, administers tests at the Center; a clinical psychologist is available part time for consultation services; and a district-paid speech therapist provides services as necessary.

Other employees include a full-time administrative secretary and a clerk-typist, who perform clerical duties for the program; and two drivers, who pick up children at their schools and transport them to and from the Center.

SPECIAL TRAINING FOR TEACHERS

Teacher training is a significant part of the Yuba County Reading-Learning Center program, serving not only the teachers at

the Center in Olivehurst but those in schools throughout the county. During 1969-70 an estimated 294 Yuba County teachers received inservice training through the Reading-Learning Center.

Training includes both inservice sessions and special courses at the Reading-Learning Center. The Center station wagon is used to transport teachers to the Ellen K. Raskab Institute of the College of Holy Names in Oakland, Calif., for special courses in reading. The Institute offers courses that meet the needs of Yuba County teachers as much as possible, such as diagnostic reading, remedial reading, language development, and reading for exceptional children. The courses are held at the Oakland campus on Saturdays during the school year and daily during the summer. A varying number of Yuba County teachers go to these classes, depending on their needs and available time. During 1969-70, eight of the 11 Center teachers attended regularly.

Special classes are also provided in conjunction with the University of California at Davis. They are held at the Reading-Learning Center in Olivehurst and are offered on a contract basis with the University and worked out with the dean of extension services. The courses depend on the needs and desires of Yuba County teachers; the sizes of classes range from small groups of about 15

to large groups of up to 70. Courses offered in the past have included reading for Spanish-speaking pupils, psychology of adolescents, teaching bilingual children, introduction to sociology, and administration of the Illinois Test of Psycholinguistic Abilities. These are open to all Yuba County teachers as well as those involved with the Reading-Learning Center.

Other classes and workshops are held as needs and interests dictate. For example, when county teachers expressed a need for a wider variety of mathematics materials for their students, a summer workshop was held and teachers designed and made their own materials for use in the classroom. A similar need led to a course in curriculum materials for reading with 2-hour sessions, 1 hour for lectures on materials and 1 hour for actually making materials. These materials are cataloged at the Center according to the skill they are designed to develop.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT DAY

Workshops and conferences are a vital part of the weekly program at the Reading-Learning Center. Students come to the Center only 4 days per week, Wednesdays being reserved for inservice training for clinic teachers and other interested teachers in the county who can arrange to attend.

Each Wednesday morning the Center staff meets to discuss reading techniques and materials. These meetings are conducted by the resource teacher, who presents new reading materials and demonstrates teaching techniques.

On Wednesday noons, a 1-hour staff meeting is held at the Center to discuss case studies of students with representative problems. Often a guest is invited to describe his relationship with the student being considered and to share his perceptions of the problem. This guest may be the child's principal, teacher, or school nurse. The case studies are intended to evoke discussion and to increase the staff members' understanding of the needs and problems of students.

Wednesday afternoons are devoted to special activities of the Reading-Learning Center, such as lectures by visiting educators, educational television programs, and discussions of professional books and journals. During the afternoon, the clinic teachers may also visit their students' schools to confer with the classroom teachers, check on the progress of students, and coordinate Center instruction with that in the regular classroom.

Clinic teachers are reimbursed for training expenses such as tuition and mileage; their attendance at training sessions is mandatory. Other Yuba County teachers can attend training sessions on a voluntary basis, without receiving expense money, if the sessions are held after school hours or if their schools provide substitutes for release time. Teachers in the district are also encouraged to use the resource and professional library at the Reading-Learning Center, which is available to them at all times.

16 PARENT-COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Each participating target school has established a parents' advisory committee for the school's reading program. Three parents from each of these groups are also members of the Yuba County Reading-Learning Center Advisory Committee which meets once a month, with the Center Director as chairman. This committee is directly responsible to the Yuba County Community Advisory Committee, a group required by the State and comprised of 16 individuals including parents, school administrators, and representatives of various political, ethnic, and other community-interest groups. Major policy decisions are considered by this group.

Members of the community are also involved in the Reading-Learning Center as volunteer workers.

BUDGET

Since 1966 the total cost of the Reading-Learning Center has been $175,000 to $200,000 per 12-month school year. Funding is 100 percent Federal through title I ESEA funds. Major costs of initiating the program included the new portable buildings and renovations in the old building, prorated at $25,000 per year over 3 years; $25,000 for instructional materials and equipment; $160,000 for personnel salaries; and $8,100 for three station wagons for transporting students between schools and the Center.

Continuing costs each year include $5,000 for equipment and materials, $4,500 for salaries for administrative personnel (a large portion is paid by the district); $142,000 for salaries for instructional personnel and half the salary of the printer; $7,500 for health services; $5,000 for transportation; and $5,800 for plant operation and maintenance.

Program administrators estimate that the per-pupil cost of the program for 1969-70 was about $300; this is in addition to the base cost of $700 per pupil in the district. Inservice training costs are about $500 to $1,000 per teacher each year.

Evaluation

The table below indicates the improvement in median grade placement scores of 167 children who were given pretests and posttests of the Durrell Analysis of Reading Difficulties in 1969-70.

School grade level	Number of students	Oral subtest score improvement	Silent subtest score improvement	Word analysis subtest score improvement
2	6	.8	.5	1.5
3	40	1.0	1.5	1.7
4	51	.7	1.4	1.7
5	41	.7	1.0	1.6
6	18	.3	.6	1.7
7	10	.7	.7	1.5
8	1	.7	3.2	.3

A checklist was also filled out by Center teachers to determine changes in attitudes of the students who attended the Center during 1969-70. The results below are for 165 children in grades 2 through 8; this group is the same as that given the Durrell Analysis except that it includes only seven seventh graders and two eighth graders.

To what degree has this child:	Little	Average	Much
Changed his attitudes toward school and education?	9	66	90
Raised his occupational and/or educational aspirational levels?	13	86	66
Increased his expectations of success in school?	9	51	105

Success of the teacher training component of the program was indicated by the positive responses of Center teachers to a questionnaire concerning their opinions about the program. A more objective indication of success was the fact that, in 1969-70 of the 40 graduates from the training program, 37 remained in the school district as reading specialists. Many continued in the field to become certified teachers. There were no teacher dropouts from the program.

For Further Information

Visits to the Yuba County Reading-Learning Center should be arranged with the director and her staff at least a week in advance.

Visitors may drive to the Center or may use air transportation provided by regular flights scheduled from the San Francisco International Airport to the Yuba City Airport. Car rental services are available, and Olivehurst is a 5- or 10-minute drive from the airport.

For further information, contact:

Dr. Eleanor Thonis, Director
Yuba County Reading-Learning Center
Eleventh Avenue and Powerline Road
Olivehurst, California 95961
(916) 743-9267

The Reading Center can supply upon request various articles concerning compensatory education, the booklet *Tools to Identify Reading Needs* ($3 per copy), and occasionally, annual reports of the ESEA title I projects.

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MODEL PROGRAMS--Reading Series

Ten promising reading programs are included in this series. Fol
of these programs, their location, and a short descriptive sta

- Summer Remedial and Enrichment Program, Thomasville, Ga.
  An 8-week program of individualized and small group instruction with an emphasis on improved reading skills.

- Programed Tutorial Reading Project, Indianapolis, Ind.
  A program using paraprofessionals to individually tutor disadvantaged children in reading.

- Summer Junior High Schools, New York, N.Y.
  An intensive summer remedial program which fosters reading growth for junior high school students.

- Topeka Reading Clinic, Centers, and Services, Topeka, Kans.
  A remedial reading program serving about 1,000 students in grades 4 through 9.

- Bloom Twp. High School Reading Program, Chicago Heights, Ill.
  A high school reading program to help poor readers through individually prescribed study in specific content areas.

- Intensive Reading
  A team approach
  struction to di

- Elementary Reading
  Centers which p
  instruction for
  and reading res

- School-Within-A-Sc
  A program for
  grade students
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- Remedial Reading P
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high school reading program to help poor readers
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ontent areas.

- Intensive Reading Instructional Teams, Hartford, Conn.
  A team approach providing intensive reading instruction to disadvantaged first-grade children.
- Elementary Reading Centers, Milwaukee, Wis.
  Centers which provide remedial reading instruction for elementary school children and reading resources services for teachers.
- School-Within-A-School, Keokuk, Iowa
  A program for low-achieving seventh-grade students to develop basic reading skills and improve student attitudes toward school.
- Remedial Reading Program, Pojoaque, N.M.
  A small-group remedial reading program for Mexican-American and Indian children.
- Yuba County Reading-Learning Center, Marysville, Calif.
  A two-part program of clinic instruction and teacher training to improve children's reading skills.

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